



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



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SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC
INSTRUCTION

October 25, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Thomas D. Watkins, Jr.

SUBJECT: Presentation on the Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant Resources Being Developed for the Web Advocating Strong Standards-based Induction Support for Teachers (ASSIST)

In an effort to address the recommendations of the Ensuring Excellent Educators Task Force, the Michigan Department of Education submitted a proposal and was awarded a federal Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant in 2002. Using this grant, the Department has worked collaboratively with Michigan State University, the University of Michigan, and Wayne State University to create professional development resources for beginning teachers and mentors. These resources will be disseminated through the cooperative efforts of the Michigan Education Association, Michigan Federation of Teachers and School Related Personnel, Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association, Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals, and university personnel over the next year.

The purpose of the ASSIST project is to support beginning teachers, experienced teachers, and principals as they work together to study and learn about practice in a professional learning community. Using the State Board of Education approved Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program Standards as a base, the ASSIST resources will support teachers who are continually learning, who value inquiry and collaboration, and will develop as high quality teacher leaders for the profession (Moir & Gless, 2003). The ASSIST materials are designed to provide tools for building collegial conditions and practices of support where beginning teachers are not left alone to learn to teach.

Good induction programs matter--they matter for retention, they matter for improving teacher quality, they matter for increasing teaching satisfaction, and openness to learning and collegial practice. Too many teachers are leaving the profession because they receive inadequate support, are overwhelmed with management concerns, and feel they have little voice in how decisions are made (Ingersoll, 2001; Stanulis & Burrill, 2004). The induction years should be recognized as a distinct phase in learning to teach (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) and a key place for learning, growth

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and support that occupies a special place in the development of a teacher (Paine, Pimm, Britton, Raizen & Wilson, in press).

The professional development experiences designed on this website are based on the understanding that knowledge from engagement in professional development can improve teaching practice. The tools and resources in this website:

- 1 Focus on critical problems of practice (Little, 1988) that are school-based and embedded in teacher work (Abdal-Haqq, 1995).
2. Provide for ways to develop skills long enough to ensure progressive gains in knowledge, skill, and confidence (Little, 1988).
- 3 Provide opportunities for teachers to ask their own questions, engage in research-based inquiry around their own questions, and reflect on new understandings around subject matter, students and learning, and teaching (Wilson & Berne, 1999).
4. Direct close attention to student learning and the context in which teaching takes place (Ball, 1996), which should in part guide assessment of its effectiveness (Abdal-Haqq, 1995).
5. Nudge educators to move from individual work to joint work (Lieberman & Miller, 2000), to recognize and foster teachers as professionals and leaders (Putnam & Borko, 1997) and to create a community of practice among teachers who study authentic issues together (Stanulis, Campbell & Hicks, 2002; Stanulis, Fallona & Pearson, 2002).
6. Place learning at the center of teaching (Lieberman & Miller), by providing ways for teachers to continuously learn while tackling their own real world problems (Phlegar & Hurley, 1999).

Through collegial engagement with the ASSIST resources, educators will enjoy learning together while also supporting beginning teacher learning. In essence, educators will develop as Advocates for Strong Standards-based Induction Support for Teachers (ASSIST).